

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENTARY ON AUGUST 13 TRANSIT VIOLATIONS

SUMMARY: NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REPRINTED ON AUG 21 COMMENTARY FROM MOSCOW RADIO " PEACE AND PROGRESS" DEFENDING ACTIONS OF GDR IN TURNING BACK WEST GERMAN DEMONSTRATORS ON AUGUST 13. WEST BERLIN NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN RUSSIAN COMMENTARY HEAVY PLAY; MORE CONSERVATIVE PAPERS HAVE ADDED COMMENTARIES OF THEIR OWN DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST FRG INACTION OVER AUTOBAHN INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND WEEKEND EDITION DATED AUGUST 21/22 REPRINTED LENGTHLY COMMENTARY OF MOSCOW RADIO STATION " PEACE AND PROGRESS" WHICH DEFENDED GDR DECISION TO TURN BACK DEMONSTRATORS PARTICIPATING IN AUGUST 13 STERN-FAHRT. SOVIET COMMENTARY EMPHASIZED THAT GDR ALONE HAS RIGHT TO CONTROL TRANSPORT ACROSS ITS TERRITORY BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND WEST BERLIN, AND OBSERVED

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THAT THOSE (GERMAN) NEWSPAPERS WHICH REPRINT SEGMENTS

OF THE QA IN THEIR COLUMNS IN AN EFFORT TO PROVE THAT GDR IS OBLIGATED TO PERMIT FREE PASSAGE TO ANYONE, INCLUDING PROVOCATEURS, HAVE IN THE COMMENTATOR'S VIEW, " COMPLETELY LOST TOUCH WITH REALITY."

2." PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTATOR ARGUED THAT TRANSIT BETWEEN FRG AND WEST BERLIN CAN ONLYBE CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH GDR LAWS. IN ACTING TO TURN BACK PROVOCATEURS WHO HAD ADVERTISED PUBLICLY AND IN ADVANCE THEIR INTENTIONS TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE GDR, THE GDR ACTED NOT ONLY LEGALLY, BUT ALSO IN MOST APPROPRIATE FASHION.

3. REFERRING TO THE MEETING OF THE JOINT TRANIST COMMISSION CALLED FOR BY THE FRG," PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTATOR IMPLIED THAT IT WAS NOT THE BUSINESS OF THEGDR TO JUSTIFY ITS ACTIONS BUT RATHER ARGUED IT WAS UP TO FRG REPRESENTATIVES TO DEMONSTRATE HOW WEST WILL NOW ACT TO PREVENT FUTURE MISUSES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ROUTES OF THEGDR.

4. COMMENTATOR WENT ON TO SAY THAT STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THREE WESTERN POWERS ON AUGUST 13 AUTOBAHN INCIDENT LEND NO FURTHER CREDENCE TO THE FRG CLAIM THAT THE TRANSIT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN VIOLATED.

5. " PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTARY CONCLUDED WITH PIOUS STATEMENT AND WARNING THAT NEITHER THE USSR NOR GDR SEEKS COMPLICATIONS IN AND AROUND WEST BERLIN. HOWEVER, THOSE WHO AS A RESULT DRAW FALSE CONCLUSION THAT SOVIETS AND THE GDR WILL SOMEHOW PERMIT THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS AND INTERESTS TO BE INFRINGED UPON AND WILL PUT UP WITH VIOLATIONS OF AGREEMENTS IN FORCE ARE MAKING A MISTAKE.

6. STRONGEST REACTION TO " PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTARY HAS COME THUS FAR FROM SPRINGER'S MORGENPOST AND DIE WELT.

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7. MORGENPOST COMMENTATOR RUDOLF STIEGE CLAIMED THAT " PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTARY PROVED SOVIETS WERE BEHIND AUG 13 TRANSIT VIOLATIONS. MORGENPOST FURTHER CRITICIZES FRG FOR NOT HAVING IMMEDIATELY REJECTED GDR PRESENTATION IN TRANSIT COMMISSION AS BEING INSUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR TURNING BACK JUNGE UNION TRAVELLERS. THE ARGUMENT THAT FRG HAD TO CONSULT WITH WESTERN ALLIES IS, IN MORGENPOST COMMENTATOR'S VIEW, NOT CONVINCING SINCE

VIOLATIONS OF TRANSIT AGREEMENT DO NOT REQUIRE ALLIED CONFIRMATION.

8. WELT COMMENTATOR FRIEDHELM KEMNA AUG 23 EXPRESSED STRONG DISPLEASURE THAT BONN HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO REACT STRONGLY IN PARTICULAR SINCE THE SPD/FDP COALITION HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WILL NOT CUT OFF TRADE CREDITS TO THE EAST EVEN IN THE FACE OF SERIOUS TRANSIT AGREEMENT VIOLATIONS. HE DESCRIBES GDR ACTIONS AS THREATENING TO ESTABLISH DANGEROUS PRECEDENT BY PERMITTING IT TO HAVE FINAL SAY ON WHO MAY TRAVEL TO WEST BERLIN. KEMNA ARGUES THAT "PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTARY, IN ASCRIBING TO GDR THE SOLE RIGHT TO REGULATE TRANSIT TRAFFIC HARKENS BACK TO THE POLITICS AND THREATS OF KHRUSHCHEV DURING THE 1958-59 BERLIN CRISES.

9. KEMNA ALSO REPORTS CONCERN OVER ALLIED DISAGREEMENT IN BONN ABOUT WHETHER TO MAKE A PROTEST TO THE SOVIETS AND IF SO, AT WHAT LEVEL; HE CONCLUDES THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE SURPRISED, IN THE FACE OF BONN'S WILLINGNESS TO SOFT-PEDAL THE ENTIRE ISSUE, TO SAY NOTHING OF THE ALLIES' DISAGREEMENT ON THE ISSUE, WHEN IN THE FUTURE THE EAST ACTS WITH EASE AND COOLNESS, WHEN CARRYING OUT ITS VIOLATIONS OF THE QA.

10. COMMENT: THRUST OF "PEACE AND PROGRESS" COMMENTARY GOES FAR BEYOND THE GDR ARGUMENTS OF TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETING AUG 19 WHEN THE GDR REPORTEDLY CLAIMED ONLY THAT THERE WERE SUFFICIENT GROUNDS TO EXPECT MISUSE BY YOUNG CDU TRAVELLERS OF THE TRANSIT ROUTES. THE SOVIETS SEEM TO BE SAYING AGAIN THAT ACCESS TO BERLIN FOR WEST GERMANS AND WEST BERLINERS DEPENDS ON WEST BERLIN'S GOOD BEHAVIOR AS DETERMINED BY SOVIETS AND GDR.

GEORGE

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